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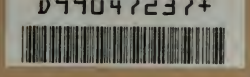

A MOTHER'S PARTING WORDS TO HER SOLDIER BOY.

My Dear Son:—

At the time of our separation, my heart was too tenderly and deeply affected to permit me to give utterance to the words of affectionate counsel, which I longed to pour into your ear. My mingled emotions of love, grief, and anxiety could find vent only in tears. But I have concluded in this manner to transmit to you the words of instruction, warning and encouragement, which I should have preferred to speak to you with my lips, had not the feelings awakened by your departure for the army, overpowered my self-control. You need not be told that I love you, that I cherish a deep solicitude for your welfare, and that my happiness is bound up with your prosperity. I have a claim to your attention which I am sure your filial affection will not allow you to disregard.

I gave up my son, without reluctance, indeed, I may say with joy, to enter the army of his country. The war in which we are unfortunately involved, has been forced upon us. We have asked for nothing but to be let alone. We are contending for the great fundamental principle of the American Revolution: that all authority is derived from the consent of the governed. The attempt on the part of the Federal Government to coerce, not, as it is falsely pretended, a factious party, but free and independent States, governed by unprecedented majorities, is utterly subversive of republican government. The question to be settled by this conflict is, whether the Confederate States shall be permitted to govern themselves, or whether they shall be governed by States whose political views, and social institutions, are widely different from their own. To the South nothing remains but absolute subjugation and debasement, or

victory. In such a strife, I cheerfully offer my son, the cherished jewel of my heart, on my country's altar; and if I had ten sons, I would resign them all with equal pleasure. I trust that my son will act the man. Fighting, as he is, for independence, home, honor, everything dear to the heart of a freeman, he would be unworthy of the soil that gave him birth—the land of patriots and heroes—the father whose name he bears, and the mother who nursed him, if he should not prove himself to be loyal and brave. Let me urge you, then, my son, to be what I am sure you will be, a good soldier. Obey the commands of your superiors, be courteous to your equals, and be kind to the distressed, even to your enemies, so far as you may be without strengthening the cause in which they are engaged.

But I write to you chiefly, my boy, to impress on your heart the importance of enlisting under the banner of the Cross. The searcher of hearts knows that my greatest desire is, that you should be a sincere and consistent Christian. I have feebly endeavored by my instructions, prayers and example, to win you to the service of Christ. You may have thought it strange that I have conversed directly with you so little concerning your religious state and destiny. I desire to confess to you, and with shame before God, my deficiency in this respect. I have ever found a difficulty in speaking to my children on the subject of salvation, arising from I know not what else but timidity, that has caused me great sorrow, and especially since you have passed to the dangers of the tented field, and beyond the reach of my anxious, beseeching words. Forgive me this wrong, and accept this communication as the best atonement which under the circumstances, I can offer. I feel now, that if I could see you, I would, from the fulness of my fond and burdened heart, entreat you in such words as follow:

You did not cease to be a moral agent when you became a soldier. Assuming new responsibilities to your country, you did not weaken your responsibilities to God. You should not only render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's but unto God the things that are God's. Many good and intelligent men have maintained that a profession of arms is incompatible with a life of piety. It must be conceded that the genius and spirit of Christianity are utterly opposed to war. Christ is the Prince of peace; at his birth the heavenly host sang

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"peace on earth;" the Gospel is a message of peace, and its universal diffusion and influence will banish war from the earth. Isa. 11. 2-4. But a careful examination of the Scriptures must convince us, that there is nothing in the demands of a just and defensive warfare at variance with the spirit and duties of Christianity. To say nothing of Moses, Joshua and David, who were renowned alike for their piety and their military achievements, we find that several Roman Centurions, in the very sunlight of the Apostolic age, were commended for their faith, devotion, and good works. Lu. VII, 9. Acts X. John, the fearless harbinger of Christ, exhorted the Roman soldiers, not to abandon their standards, but to avoid the vices incident to their profession. "Do violence," said he, "to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." Lu. III, 14. I refer to these texts for the two-fold purpose of confirming my views, and leading you to consult the Scriptures, the only safe guide in faith and practice.

There are great and appalling obstacles in the way of your conversion amid the din and temptations of a camp. The lack of religious instruction, and of opportunities for retirement and secret prayer, together with the excitements and corrupting influences which attend a soldier's life, are serious but not insuperable hindrances to piety. Without abating one iota from his duties to the country, the soldier may find time for religious meditation, secret prayer, and the consecration of himself to Christ. Two young men, I have been credibly informed, at the close of the battle of Bethel, were so impressed with the Divine goodness in their preservation, that they retired to the forest, and made a full, solemn and joyful surrender of themselves to the Prince of peace.

Let me urge you then, my dear son, to make it your first, chief, constant concern to become a Christian. God demands nothing but a willing heart. In the hour when you are willing to forsake all your sins, and to receive Christ as your Prophet, Priest and King, you shall find mercy, and there will be joy in the presence of the angels of God over you. Christ never rejected a repenting sinner, and he never will. Ah, my son, if you have no soul to save,—no sins to be forgiven, if Christ did not die for you,—if there is no Heaven, no hell, no immortality,—then you may live without repentance and salvation. But you

have a soul—you are a sinner—Christ shed his blood for you—you are immortal, and destined to the joys of Heaven or the woes of perdition, and therefore, religion is your surpreme necessity. You have motives to piety, not only as a man, but as a *soldier*. Of all men the soldier has the greater need of piety.

Under the privations and hardships of camp life, he greatly needs the consolations that nothing but grace can minister. And, what but grace can preserve him from the seductions to vice by which so many promising soldiers have been ruined? He is in frequent peril of losing his life, and should have that constant preparation for death, which can be found only in sincere devotion to Christ. Let me urge you then, my child, by all the tenderness of a mother's love, by all the anxieties of a father's heart, and by, what should have more influence with you, all the compassion of the Redeemer's bosom, to enlist under the banner of the Prince of life and glory.

You must, my dear boy, be a Christian or suffer a sad and irreparable defeat. You may, without faith in Christ, storm cities, win battles, achieve the independence of your beloved country, and gain imperishable renown; but you cannot secure the kingdom of Heaven. Mohammed promised Paradise to all who should lose their lives in his war; but Christ does not promise eternal life to them that fall in the battles of their country. He that would win a crown of life, must gain a victory over sin. The kingdom of God must be taken by storm; but it can be stormed only by faith, and prayer, and obedience. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," It is not reasonable to suppose that God will accept the services rendered to Caesar for those due to himself; or, that patriotism should be a substitute for piety. The heroic, but ungodly soldier, may fill a grave honored by a nation's tears and marked by a towering monument; but his soul, alas! must perish,

I would have you, my son, not only to be a Christian, but to honor that sacred name. Make the Bible your constant companion—prayer your delightful employment— and the glory of Christ the the end of all your deeds. Seek to be adorned with all the graces of the Spirit, and to abound in all the fruits of righteousness. Keep aloof from all the vices which corrupt and degrade the army. I need not warn you against profanity, that

common but ill bred sin, which you have been taught to detest; but I would specially guard you against drunkenness, that most insidious, prevalent and degarding vice. I would have you abstain from strong drink as you would from henbane. All experience has demonstrated that it is never neccessary but as a medicine. All the toils, exposures and privations of a campaign may be endured without it, and better without it than with it.

I am sure, my child, you will not be a worse soldier for being a good Christian. Piety will not make you effeminate or cowardly. Some of the bravest soldiers of the world have been humble Christians. Cromwell, Gardiner and Havelock, thunderbolts of war, were as devout as they were heroic. Our own illustrious Washington maintained the claims of Christianity, amid the demoralizing influences of the Revolution, with a zeal corresponding with the heroism with which he fought the battles of our independence. Why should not the Christian be courageous? He has less cause to love life or dread death than other men. In the path of duty he has nothing to fear. Life and death may be equally pleasing to him. The apostle Paul, in the prospect of martyrdom, could say: "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better,—nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."

And now, my dear soldier boy, I must take leave of you. Remember that you have a large share in my love, my sympathies, and my prayers. By day and by night, you are in my thoughts: and often the unbidden tear flows down my cheek when I think of your sufferings and dangers. Let me have joy of you, my son, and I can have no greater joy than to hear that you are doing your duty—your whole duty—to your country and to God. I trust we shall meet again. I pray the Father of mercies to cover your head in the day of battle. Should life be preserved though the perils of the camp and conflict, and you be permitted to return in triumph to your home, I need not assure you that you will find a welcome, and that your presence will diffuse a sunshine over our domestic circle; and among all the loving hearts that will greet your return, none will be so thrilled with delight as your mother's. And should you come back to my fond embrace, not corrupted and degraded by the

temptations of camp life, but purified and adorned by the grace of the gospel, in answer to my poor prayers, then I can exclaim with the patriarch Jacob, when he heard that his favorite son, Joseph, was living, and raised to the Viceroyship of Egypt, "It is enough!" But should you fall in the stern conflict for your country's rights, you will fill an honored grave; and I humbly trust that, through the grace and righteousness of our Redeemer, we may meet in a world, where wars and rumors of wars can never disturb us; but where love, peace, and joy, forever reign. It shall be my earnest endeavor, as I entreat you that it may be yours, to be meet for a participation in the delights and glories of that world. Receive now the blessing of your own and only

MOTHER.

THE SERVANTS PRAY FOR YOU.

A respected Baptist Minister of Alabama, thus writes:

As is my custom, I preached to the colored people in the afternoon of last Lord's day, and after the sermon I called upon William Pitts, servant of Col. D. A. Boyd, to close the services. He arose at the call—as he always does; and after a few remarks, complimenting the sermon and exhorting the congregation to heed the warning given, he stated that there was another matter about which he would like to speak to them. He then stated that some of their masters and young masters had gone off to the wars, and that they were exposed to many hardships and sufferings; that some of the soldiers were poor and needy, and he wanted to do something for them; that he had conversed with others, and he desired every one to throw in a little, if it was but a dime.

William then referred to the recent battle of Manassas, and spoke of the wounded and slain in a most feeling manner. But the most touching of all was his reference to his master William

—the gallant Lieut. Wm. D. Pitts, who fell in the engagement. He spoke of having raised him; of the many conversations they'd had together; of his feelings when he now looked over his plantations, and witnessed the sadness and deep mourning that now filled the hearts of his weeping servants. During his remarks, there were to be heard groans and sobbing all around, and tears to be seen flowing freely from many eyes. So much feeling, I have seldom witnessed on any occasion. At the close of his remarks there was a general rush to the table—and, in half-dimes and dimes, they contributed five dollars and sixty-five cents.

Late in the afternoon, an old woman belonging to Capt, Clark, who was not at the church, having heard what was done there, came, to my house and handed me fifty cents—stating that she could not be at church, but "felt like she wanted to do something for the poor soldiers." She spoke of how tenderly some of them had been raised, and how she felt for them when she heard of the hardships they had to suffer. She then told me much about her master, and how she prayed that he might be bought back safe, &c.

It is due to the colored people to state that but very few knew that an effort would be made to raise means to help on the the war, and consequently many were unprepared to do any thing. Indeed, I did not know it myself: I only knew that the subject had been spoken of by a few individuals.

And now permit me to say, in conclusion, that I have witnessed more feeling in behalf of the company that left this place, among the colored people when prayer has been offered for them in their afternoon meetings, than I have seen among the whites. They are feeling deeply for their masters who have gone in defence of the country, and are praying for their safe return.

CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

1 Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armor on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through his eternal Son ;

2 Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
And in his mighty power ;
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts,
Is more than conqueror.

3 Stand then in his great might,
With all his strength endued ;
But take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God ;

4 That having all things done,
And all your conflicts past,
You may o'ercome, through Christ alone,
And stand entire at last.

5 From strength to strength go on,
Wrestle, and fight, and pray
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well-fought day.

6 Still let the Spirit cry
In all his soldiers, "Come,"
Till Chist the Lord descend from high
And take the conquerors home.

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